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TURKEY-CYPRUS

The Turkish government appears to be moderating its policy on Cyprus, as the February 5 deadline for a cut-off of US military assistance approaches.

Prime Minister Irmak, following meetings with his National Security Council and political party leaders, announced on Wednesday that Nicosia airport may soon be opened under joint management and that the port of Famagusta will open to international shipping.

Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash has told the British that he will propose the following at his meeting today with Greek Cypriot negotiator Clerides:

--The opening of the Turkish-controlled port of Famagusta to Greek and Greek Cypriot shipping and establishment of a transport corridor through to Nicosia in exchange for facilities for Turkish shipping through Limassol.

--The return of about 5,000 Greek Cypriot refugees to their homes.

--A guarantee by the Turkish military that Greek Cypriots would not be harassed.

There would not, however, be any early withdrawal of the Turkish front line, said Denktash.

Despite Denktash's gestures, the positions of the negotiators of the two communities have been so far apart on the airport and the ports issues that resolution of them before February 5 will be difficult.

On another issue, Irmak said that, "in principle," Turkey favors taking the Aegean dispute to the International Court of Justice, as the Greek prime minister proposed earlier this week. Irmak noted, however, that

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Turkey still intends to begin seismic exploration in the Aegean next month. Irmak's words on the Aegean dispute may be premature. A Turkish Foreign Ministry official has told the US embassy that no decision has yet been made on the Greek proposal.

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PORTUGAL

The cancellation of the political rallies scheduled for today in Lisbon is being termed a success for the Communists, although the moderates in the armed forces appear to have emerged somewhat strengthened and more cohesive from the maneuvering on the issue.

The Portuguese Socialist Party has reluctantly agreed to abide by a government ban and cancel its rally in Lisbon today, rescheduling it for February 7. The Communists were quick to agree to the ban, giving added strength to reports that they had scheduled their rally at the same time as the Socialists merely to force a cancellation.

According to Minister Without Portfolio Vitor Alves, however, the announcement of a third demonstration by leftist extremists brought about the cancellation order. The security forces feared that they would be unable to control any violence stemming from an additional demonstration. In fact, the violence-prone leftist extremists may still challenge the government order and hold their demonstration.

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AUSTRALIA

The Labor Party's biennial policy conference next week will deal with a number of contentious issues. With a strong possibility of elections later this year, party leaders will be trying to keep the lid on bickering, but leftists have served notice that they plan to challenge several government policies.

Canberra's neutral stance toward the Middle East will probably be the most controversial issue. The gulf between the moderates, led by Prime Minister Whitlam, and the leftists widened this week when the government denied visas to a Palestine Liberation Organization delegation invited by party leftists.

The leadership should be able to control the leftists on several issues of special interest to the US. An expected leftist bid for recognition of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam can probably be defeated. Whitlam and his dominant moderate faction will also be able to vote down several leftist resolutions calling for the closing of US defense and scientific installations in Australia.

To avoid another contentious issue, the leadership will recommend that a US request for an Omega navigational aid station in Australia be given further study by the parliamentary committee that has kept it bottled up. Government leaders have privately expressed understanding of the US requirement for the facility, but their failure to press for a decision reflects in part a reluctance to add to the number of US installations in Australia.

It does not appear that there will be any serious challenge to Whitlam's position, despite widespread dissatisfaction with his leadership. Deputy Prime Minister Cairns, although associated with the left wing, appears content to work in tandem with Whitlam, and there is no other party official in a position to make a bid for the leadership. Also, the party is probably reluctant to get into a damaging internal row in what may turn out to be an election year.

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